



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

## NOTES.

BY GEORGE A. BARTON, PH.D.,

Associate in Biblical Literature and Semitic Languages in Bryn Mawr College.

---

### 1. ON THE SEMITIC ISHTAR CULT.

In an article on "*Ashtoreth and Her Influence in the Old Testament*," published in the *Journal of Biblical Literature* in 1891, I remarked that a deity, identical in name or in character or in both with Ashtoreth, is found among all the Semitic nations except the Ethiopians, and that our lack of knowledge of such a deity among them may be due solely to the paucity of non-Christian Ethiopic literary remains.\* Since then I have published in *HEBRAICA*, Vols. IX. and X., some account of the Semitic Ishtar cult in all the Semitic lands except Abyssinia, but was until now unable to find any trace of it among the Ethiopians. At last, however, a deity bearing this name has come to light in this part of the Semitic area, so that we are assured that in some form this cult was coextensive with the Semitic peoples.

The evidence for this comes from Professor D. H. Müller's *Epigraphische Denkmäler aus Abessinien*, Wien. 1894, which forms Heft III. of Vol. XLIII. of *Denkschriften der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien, Philosophisch-Historisch Classe*. The inscriptions published in this work are edited from impressions made by J. Theodore Bent, Esq.

Tafel II. of Müller's work gives a fac-simile of an inscription of Ezana, son of Ela-Amida, king of Aksum, which is on p. 35 ff. edited, translated and accompanied with introduction and notes. The inscription is in the Geez script, and dates, as Professor Müller shows, from the early part of the fifth century A. D. The Sabaeen and Greek alphabets had been used in Abyssinia until the last half of the fourth century, as bilingual inscriptions, found in these tongues and published by Müller in this same work, prove. A reform in the script and the written language, by which the Geez writing was introduced, must, as Professor Müller points out, have occurred in the last years of Ela-Amida or the early years of Ezana. Ela-Amida began to rule at the latest about 380 A. D., so that the reform of the script could not have been accomplished before 400 A. D., and our inscription was probably written at no great distance in time afterwards.

Ezana, the writer, calls himself king of Aksum, and of several other places, including in the list Raidan and Saba, indicating that at this time the mother

---

\* Cf. *Journal of Biblical Literature*, Vol. X., p. 77.

country of Sabaea, or Southern Arabia, was subject to the Ethiopians. The inscription records a victory of Ezana over the people of Adan, and after describing the onslaught, the number of slain and the prisoners, it proceeds l. 22, ff. : "And he turned back unharmed with the people of Adan and erected a throne here in Sada and committed him to the protection of Astar, Barras and Medr." The inscription then closes with an imprecation against the king's enemies somewhat in the strain of those at the end of the annals of the Assyrian kings.

This passage shows us that Christianity had not yet wholly triumphed in Abyssinia, and that chief among the deities of the royal pantheon was a god identical in name with Athtar, Ishtar and Astarte. It will be observed that the Ethiopic form of the name, Astar, resembles the Moabitic form Ashtar, which appears on the Moabite stone in the compound name Ashtar-Chemosh.

This name attests the presence of the Ishtar Cult in Abyssinia. As Astar is named first, we may infer that he was the leading deity of the pantheon. Athtar of South Arabia was, it will be remembered, a masculine deity. There is no definite hint in Ezana's inscription which reveals with certainty the gender of this god in Abyssinia. A close connection had, however, long existed between Abyssinia and South Arabia, as the use of the Sabaeen alphabet in the earlier Abyssinian inscriptions shows, and at the time of our inscription that connection was maintained by the extension of the dominion of the king of Aksum over the territories of Raidan and Saba. Indeed, it is altogether likely that the African Semites were emigrants from Sabaea. These facts, together with the fact that Astar is named first among the gods, would lead us to infer that Astar was, like Athtar, a masculine deity. We cannot, however, be certain of this until more evidence appears.

Since *The Semitic Ishtar Cult* which appeared in *HEBRAICA* was written, Fasculus II., Pars. IV., Tom. I., of the *Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum*, i. e., of the Sabaeen portion of the *Corpus*, has appeared, as has Hommel's *Süd-Arabische Chrestomathie*, and Mordtman's *Himjarische Inschriften und Alterthümer*. This last work is Heft VII. of the Berlin Museum's *Mittheilungen aus den Orientalischen Sammlungen*. These works bring considerable new material within the reach of the American student, and add a few facts to his knowledge of the Athtar cult in South Arabia.

No. 102 of the *Corpus* is an inscription from a tablet which contained on its upper right hand corner the head of a bull. The inscription consecrated the tablet to Athtar, אֶשְׁתָּר, thus adding to our evidence that the bull or ox was sacred to this god. Cf. *HEBRAICA*, Vol. X., p. 58.

These added publications make still more clear the fact that there were in Southern Arabia a multiplicity of Athtars. An inscription reproduced from Halévy by Hommel on p. 78 of his *Chrestomathie*, distinguishes three Athtars,—Athtar of Kabas, Athtar of Yaharik, and Athtar of Yahar. So also in Mordt-

man's *Himjarische Inschriften* we have three Athtars distinguished,—Athtar of Mount Thanin (No. 862), Athtar of Banâ (No. 886), and Athtar of Kabid, the building (No. 874). Each place evidently had its Athtar as in ancient Palestine and Syria each place had its Baal.

Professor Hommel thinks the epithet שֶׁרֶקֶן, "the rising," is an identification of Athtar with the morning star. This has in its favor the fact that Al-Uzza, the goddess of Mecca, who has been shown to be a form of Athtar, was identified with the morning star.\* This is, I think, more probable than the identification with the rising sun, which I formerly favored.†

The inscription, No. 862, of Mordtman's *Himjarische Inschriften* contains a passage in which Athtar is apparently called אב עֲתָר, or "father Athtar." Mordtmann is not absolutely sure of the reading. It might, he says, be אֵל עֲתָר, but he thinks אב the more probable. If this be correct, then Athtar was regarded as a father-god, and we have a trace in his character of the widespread conception of parentage and productivity, which was all but universally connected with the Ishtars and Astartes.

In treating of this, Müller calls attention to an inscription published by Derenbourg in the *Journal Asiatique*, 8 Série, Vol. II., p. 255. This inscription is of great interest as it confirms the theory of the late Professor W. R. Smith, which I followed in my *Ishtar Cult*, that Athtar was originally a mother goddess, and then developed into a masculine deity.‡ Derenbourg's inscription, translated, reads as follows:—

1. "Yaşbaḥ of Riyam son of Mauḳiṣ and Baus and his wife Karibat, possessor of . . . .
2. of the tribe of Sirwaḥ, a man of the king. They have consecrated to their lady Umm'athtar for
3. four sons, four images of pure gold because she blessed
4. them (viz.: Umm'athtar) with the boys and their daughters. And they lived—all these chil-
5. dren—and the spirits of both of them have been calmed by these children. May Umm-
6. 'athtar continue to bless his servants Yaşbaḥ and Karibat with well-formed children and to favor them themselves
7. and to favor their children. May Umm'athtar be gracious
8. and grant complete safety to the sons of Yaşbaḥ, Kharif, Magda'al, Ra-
9. babat and 'Am'atik, the descendants of Mauḳiṣ and to their harvests and good fruits in
10. the land Nakhal Khurif, and in the pastures of their camels. To Umm'athtar.

\* Cf. HEBRAICA, Vol. X., p. 64, W. R. Smith's *Kinship and Marriage in Ancient Arabia*, p. 197, and Wellhausen's *Reste Arabische Heidenthums*, p. 37. † Cf. HEBRAICA, Vol. X., pp. 56, 57 and 72.

‡ This inscription escaped my notice when I wrote the "Ishtar Cult."

This inscription not only represents Athtar as a goddess, but as a mother goddess, the giver of offspring, just the character in which Ishtar and Astarte usually appear. More than this, we catch in this inscription which comes from the very heart of the South Arabic territory the exact transition state between the mother goddess, so widely known elsewhere, and the masculine deity which otherwise appears in South Arabia. The deity is addressed by the compound name **אמעַתַּר**, (which we may resolve into its component parts and translate "mother Athtar,") and is moreover called **מֶרַת**, "the lady," and yet in the phrase **עבְדֵּיהוּ**, "his servants," the deity is referred to as a male. The theory that a male deity was here developed out of a female is not, therefore, a mere theory; this inscription demonstrates it by revealing the transition in progress.

When the development was complete the idea of parentage which was inherent in the mother-goddess was still associated with this deity, and hence the epithet **אבעַתַּר**, which Mordtmann has noted in the inscription above mentioned.

The fact that Athtar was in South Arabia at one time a goddess, renders the theory advanced by W. R. Smith in his *Kinship*, and followed by me in the *Ishtar Cult*, that Al-Uzza is but an Athtar or Astarte, much more certain, as it becomes clear beyond a doubt that Athtar was once a goddess in Arabia.

## II. ON THE GOD MUT.

In a paper published during the early part of 1894 in the *Oriental Studies* of the Oriental Club of Philadelphia on *Native Israelitish Deities*, it was proven, as I venture to think, that a god Maut, or Mut, was known in ancient Israel and Phœnicia, and that at least two proper names have been preserved in the Old Testament of which this divine name is a component part.

When that paper was published it seemed impossible to give any satisfactory account of the origin or the nature of such a deity; and in the absence of any other clue it was conjectured from the Hebrew pointing of the names referred to, that it might be but a personification of death. After it was too late even to add a foot-note to the paper in question, Sayce's *Higher Criticism and the Verdict of the Monuments* came to hand, on p. 294 of which an account is given of the discovery of some traces of the worship of the Egyptian mother-goddess Mut, near Gaza, in 1892. The natives then discovered in this locality several objects, among which were alabaster vases bearing the names of Amenophis III. and Teie, and another object bearing an inscription showing that it belonged to a temple of the goddess Mut, and that this temple had been erected by Amenophis II., grandfather of Amenophis III. This discovery indicates that near Gaza there was in the time of the eighteenth dynasty a shrine of the great Egyptian mother goddess, and suggests a different explanation of the goddess Mut in Palestine, viz., that the slight traces of the worship of Maut or Mut there

and in Phœnicia may be but survivals of the worship of the Egyptian goddess on Syrian soil from the early time when she became naturalized there under the influence of the Egyptian domination. The El-Amarna tablets show that at that time Philistia, Phœnicia and Palestine were practically one. The whole country was in a state of vassalage to Egypt, but the inhabitants were in a state of flux, and a cult planted at Gaza might easily spread to other parts of Syria.

### III. WAS ILU EVER A DISTINCT DEITY IN BABYLONIA ?


George Rawlinson in his *Five Great Monarchies* (I. 112sq.) and *The Religions of the Ancient World* (pp. 37, 38) held that there was at the head of the Babylonian pantheon a deity Il, or Ra. His sources of information were, however, not trustworthy. He relied on imperfect translations in the *Records of the Past*, on Greek sources of a late date, and on Egyptian analogies which were really quite remote. Schrader in his *Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament* (ed. 2, p. 11) indicates that he holds the same view, or did hold it in 1883. On the other hand, Tiele in his *Histoire Comparée des Anciennes Religions* (pp. 181, 182) denies the existence of such a deity; Professor Lyon of Harvard in a paper in the *Proceedings of the American Oriental Society*, May 1883, makes a clear and forcible argument against it, and more recent works omit, I believe, all mention of such a deity.

The present note is written for the purpose of calling attention to a possible explanation of Ilu as an element of proper names, different from that adopted by Professor Lyon. He says (*op. cit.*, p. clxvii.): "The result of an examination of proper names containing *ilu* would be to show that this word does not represent a particular deity, but simply 'god,' as we saw above in the case of Bab-ilu, 'Babylon.' This is not saying that *ilu* would be the same god in each case. Zikar-ilu, for instance, 'Servant of ilu,' might mean servant of Aššûr, servant of Marduk, servant of Bêl, according to the preferences of the family in conferring the name."

Such an explanation is indeed possible, but is it the only one? In the tablets from the first Babylonian dynasty published by Meissner in his *Beiträge zum Altbabylonische Privatrecht*, 1893, there are several names compounded with Ilu. Ilu-šu-ib-ni (No. 4), Buni-Ilu (No. 12), Gi-mil-Ili (Nos. 14 and 59), Šum-ma-Ili (No. 20), Ilu-ikīša (No. 25), Ilu-šu-nu-ti (No. 30), Ilu-šu-ba-ni (No. 31), Pur-Ili (No. 35), Ilu-emuḫi (No. 38), Nur-Ili (No. 39), Mutu-Ili (No. 80), Ilu-išmi-ḫani (No. 97), Apil-Ili (No. 102), Ilu-kaša and Ilu-matiša (No. 105). In addition to these I have recently observed the following names on unpublished tablets belonging to the University of Pennsylvania: Marduk\*-nu-uḫ-libbi-Ili, Ipi-iš-Ili,† and Izizu-itti-Ili.

\* The tablet is partially defaced at this point, so that the reading is doubtful.

† Found also in *Moldenke's Cuneiform Texts*, No. 22.

In some of the names of this list *Ilu* is no doubt the generic term. Such is the case in *Ilu-šu-ib-ni* = 'His god created'; so also *Ilu-šu-nu-ti*, which is probably an abbreviation from a name originally longer. *Ilu-iḫiṣa* is, however exactly parallel to *Sin-iḫiṣa* (Meissner, No. 81), and *Bêl-iḫiṣa* (Moldenke, *op. cit.* No. 16), and while Lyon's explanation may possibly be the correct one, nevertheless a strong argument from analogy could be made to support the supposition that in this class of names *Ilu* was once as much a deity as *Sin* or *Bêl* was. *Iṣtar* was used both for "goddess" and for the name of a specific deity, and why should we not suppose that the development of this word was parallel to *Ilu*? We may, I think, take it for granted that in the evolution of ideas terms which afterwards were employed to designate genera were first the names of specific objects. The usage in the case of the word *Iṣtar* denotes an arrested development of this sort—a development arrested so early that *Iṣtar* is usually a specific deity, and only in rare cases the generic term. Do we not find here some ground for supposing that *Ilu*, the masculine term, is analogous—that it was once a specific deity, and that while it was such, names like *Ilu-e muḫi*, *Ilu-iḫiṣa*, *Nur-Ili*, and *Apil-Ili* were formed and became traditional? The argument from the analogies already mentioned is strengthened by the fact that among the Hebrews or Canaanites  was in early times a distinct deity.\*

All these analogies lead me to suspect that *Ilu* was once a specific deity and underwent a transformation like that, the beginning of which we can trace in *Iṣtar*, only that in the case of *Ilu* the change went so far that almost every vestige of the specific use of the term was lost.

In the names given in Meissner's *Beiträge* the determinative is not prefixed to *Ilu*. This tends to show that the term had become, in these names, conventional, and that the consciousness of the presence of a specific deity in them had passed away. I am led, nevertheless, from the cumulative parallels here presented, to suspect that among the very early Babylonians *Ilu* was a distinct deity and that other names had in the historical period displaced it, as *Athtar* was before the historical period displaced in North Arabia.†

\* Cf. *Oriental Studies* of the Oriental Club of Phila. Boston : Giun & Co., 1894, pp. 97, 98.

† Cf. *HEBRAICA*, Vol. X., p. 66.